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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/SPG, S/CRS, AF SE NATSIOS
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: CHINESE ENGINEERS ARRIVE AMIDST REBEL THREATS

¶1. (SBU) Soon after the arrival of 135 Chinese engineer peacekeepers on November 24 in Nyala, media reported the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel group threatened to attack the Chinese engineers. According to the media, JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim Muhamed said, "They are not welcome...they can never come into our area." "I am not saying I will attack them. I will not say I will not attack them," he said.

¶2. (SBU) On November 27, JEM spokesmen Ahmed Hussein Adam, told media that despite his peoples rejection of the Chinese troops, his movement would not attack them. "In spite of the fact that Darfur people do not welcome the Chinese troops who are the main ally of Khartoum government and its principle provider of weapons, we will not target the Chinese peacekeepers."

¶3. (SBU) Media reported November 28 the Chinese ambassador to Khartoum, Li Cheng Wen saying, "Up to now there has been no incident, but we are deeply concerned about the matter."

¶4. (SBU) Embassy poloff presented a copy of the November 27 State Department press release condemning the threats against the Chinese engineering unit to Chinese embassy political officers Shen Ang and Yu Chunhua on November 28. When asked about possible Chinese responses to the JEM threats, Ang said that the threats are against all UNAMID peacekeepers of which the Chinese peacekeepers are a part and that it was expected that UNAMID is responsible for their protection. He added that these troops are not infantry but engineers who are there to support the entire Darfur Peace Agreement.

¶5. (SBU) On November 28, Post issued to the Khartoum press an Arabic language translation of the Department of State press release condemning the threat of violence against the Chinese engineering unit.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: Embassy poloffs attempted to reach by phone November 27 contacts in the JEM to express the U.S. condemnation of the remarks. We will continue to reach out both from Khartoum and El Fasher to pass this message. Due to the splintering of rebel movements, it is possible that any of the factions of the JEM or the SLA will attempt to attack the Chinese troops. They make an inviting target given China's support of Khartoum, and UNAMID will need to plan for their security accordingly.

FERNANDEZ